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STOP BLACK MEAT MARKETS

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Broadcast by J. S. Russell, Deputy Director, Food Distribution Administration, and Wallace Kadderly, Radio Service, in the Department of Agriculture's portion of the National Farm and Home Hour, Thursday, March 18, 1943, over stations associated with the Blue Network.

KADDERLY: Few people in this country will knowingly support a black market. But some of us wonder how to be sure we avoid the black marketeers. We've asked J. S. Russell, Deputy Director of the Food Distribution Administration of the Department of Agriculture, to give us some suggestions on what we consumers can do to eliminate the black markets in meat. Mr. Russell . . .

RUSSELL: There are several things consumers can do that will help clean up the black markets. And, as we all know, it's extremely important that we do these things. If we did not stop the black markets... if the Government did not get control of the meat supply, our fighting men might go without all the meat they need; we would have to cut down shipments of meat to our Allies, who already need more than we can send them; and consumers in this country might not be able to get fair shares of meat under rationing. Yes, it's very important for consumers to help stop black markets in meat.

One thing the homemaker can do is to be sure the meat she buys has come from people who are cooperating with the Department of Agriculture. That will be easy enough to do for every one of these people will have their own stamp with a harmless ink on the meat they dress and sell.

Those who have been used to buying meat from animals that were slaughtered in packing houses that maintained Federal inspection will find the same stamp as always -- the U. S. Inspected and Passed stamp with the number of the establishment. The same thing is true of those establishments that have qualified under local laws -- their regular stamp and number will serve them.

But for the rest of the meat -- the meat that used to be slaughtered on the farm and in small town slaughter houses -- there will be another stamp. This stamp will have in it the letter "P" which will stand for "Permit." It may have an added "L" too. Beside that there will be a county code number and a serial number. The homemaker needn't try to remember those code numbers. All she needs to look for is the number. If it isn't on the roast or the chops she gets, then she can ask to be shown the rest of the quarter of beef, or side of pig or saddle of lamb that it came from.

One further precaution. These provisions about stamping wholesale cuts of meat with the permit number go into effect on April 1. Some people may not be able to get stamps before that time. Those persons may put their permit number on with an indelible pencil. And farmers who don't sell enough meat to justify having a stamp may attach a tag to the small portions of meat they do sell.--showing their permit number.

That is the most important thing to look for -- the stamp of the man or company that dressed the meat.

Next look for the grade stamp. You have probably seen quarters of beef, or saddles of veal or lamb that have the ribbon marks on them which tell the grade of the meat. Those grades have been simplified somewhat lately. Now there are only four grades... choice, good, commercial and utility. Those are the names that are used by a Federal grader. Those ribbons showing the grade cover so much of the carcass that practically every retail cut of meat will have a portion of the grade brand on it. If the people who dressed the meat can't get a Federal grader to grade their meat, then they have to use letter grades. Those letter grades are double A, single A, B, and C. The same as Choice, Good, and so on, but letter designations instead of names. There is this difference also -- the letter grades aren't put on the meat in ribbons. The letters need to be put on only once on each wholesale cut of meat.

If each consumer will be sure to see those two things -- the permit stamp, and the grade stamp-- she'll know what she's getting.

Now the next question is, what does she have to pay for the meat? There are two places to look. In each butcher shop she'll find a list in plain sight giving her the ceiling prices on each cut of meat. And then in the show case she'll find cuts of meat labelled with the price per pound. She can compare the two -- the ceiling and the show case price and see that she isn't charged too much.

Those four steps will help cut out the black markets: Look for the permit stamp and for the grade stamp... then look at the show case prices and compare them with the posted ceiling prices.

KADDERLY: Farm and Home friends, these suggestions on how we can help eliminate the black markets in meat were given us by J. S. Russell, Deputy Director of the Food Distribution Administration of the Department of Agriculture.

